



MECKLENBURG COUNTY
Health Department

October 2, 2012

Health Advisory
Meningitis Cluster Investigation - Associated with Spinal Procedures

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the North Carolina Division of Public Health, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and other state health departments are investigating a cluster of meningitis cases involving patients treated with spinal steroid injections at outpatient surgical centers and pain management clinics. One patient has been identified in North Carolina and 11 more (including 2 patients who died) have been identified from one clinic in Tennessee.

On September 21, 2012, the Tennessee Department of Health was notified of a patient with clinically diagnosed meningitis following epidural injection at a Tennessee ambulatory surgical center. All initial cultures of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) and blood were negative. *Aspergillus fumigatus* was isolated from the CSF by fungal culture. Subsequent outreach has identified additional patients with a similar clinical picture consisting of:

- One or more spinal injections during July 30-September 18, 2012
- Subacute presentation of clinical meningitis, often 7-21 days following spinal procedure
- CSF profile with low glucose, elevated protein and high, neutrophil-predominant white cell count
- Negative CSF bacterial cultures and gram stain

Several patients also were found to have cerebrovascular accidents in deep brain locations.

The North Carolina Division of Public Health is requesting information on any patient with

- Diagnosed *Aspergillus* meningitis following spinal injection on or after July 30, 2012
- Meningitis of unknown etiology following spinal injection on or after July 30, 2012, with CSF profile including high or normal protein, low or normal glucose, and high, neutrophil-predominant white cell count

Please report any patients who meet these criteria to the North Carolina Division of Public Health at 919-733-3419. For additional questions or concerns, contact the Mecklenburg County Health Department at 704-336-5490.

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